



University of California, Merced
 5200 N. Lake Road
 Merced, CA 95343

MEMORANDUM

To: Associated Black Student Leaders

From: Charles Nies, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs
 Jonathan Grady, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor & Dean of Students
 Onar Primitivo, Director of the Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs
 Jessica Evora, Associate Director, Margo Souza Student Leadership Center
 Tania, Gonzalez, Ph.D., Interim Associate Director of Counseling and Psychological Services
 Kari Gomes, Police Sergeant, UCMPD

Date: June 25, 2020

Subject: Student Proposals

**Please note that this is not an exhaustive list of action items. The university will continue to generate ideas and work with students, staff, and faculty to support Black student success at UCM.*

Black lives always matter. They matter at UC Merced. They matter across our nation. They matter around the world. UC Merced is fully committed to work on ending the conditions that create injustice, conditions that are leaving our Black community dehumanized and their innocent lives taken. The enduring legacy of slavery, segregation, racism and oppression in America must be confronted and addressed systemically. **This is NOT a moment. This is a MOVEMENT.** Thus, the university has highlighted immediate (summer 2020), short-term (2020-2021), and long-term (2021+) plans to address the submitted proposals.

Proposal #1: Review and Revamp Police Advisory Board [Point of Contact(s)]: Elisabeth Gunther, General Council, Chou Her, Chief of Police, Sergeant Kari Gomes, and Charles Nies, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs

Immediate (Summer 2020)

1. Review current Police Advisory Board structure/function and make recommendations for improvements to address campus climate concerns.
2. Review current polices/practices and make recommendations for alternative approaches (RA training, faculty processes, 5150s, Mutual aid, Use of UCMPD in housing and classroom incidents, etc.).
3. UCMPD will work with the Pan-Afrikan Council, the Dean of Students Office, and the Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs to develop specific initiatives, campaigns, and programs addressing anti-Blackness and anti-Black violence.

- Initiatives, campaigns, and programs will be shared with the Pan-Afrikan Council for feedback before implementation.
4. In 2019 the Presidential Task Force on Universitywide Policing presented 27 recommendations to all UC campus policing units. UCMPD took all 27 recommendations as requirements and have worked to implement all of them (https://www.ucop.edu/policing-task-force/policing-task-force-report_2019.pdf) UCMPD will provide updates to the campus community on all 27 recommendations. Opportunities for ongoing feedback/dialogue will occur.
 5. Annual UCMPD Customer Satisfaction Survey results (students, staff, and faculty) will be shared with campus community. Recommendations will be considered and implemented.
 6. UCMPD Dispatch, effective immediately, will be sending customer service evaluations to anyone (students, staff, and faculty) they have contact with. Recommendations will be considered and implemented.
 7. UCMPD, effective immediately, will be sending customer service evaluations to anyone (students, staff, and faculty) participating in any UCMPD program or initiative (for example, Police Mentors and Police Insight Program). Recommendations will be considered and implemented.
 8. Ensure UCMPD staff continue to participate in equity, diversity, and inclusion trainings (Diversity Awareness Workshop, Queer Ally Program, etc.)
 - For example, over 50% of staff have completed the university's Diversity Awareness Workshop.
 - Work with the Office of Equity and Justice and other stakeholders to identify additional trainings and opportunities.
 - For transparency, all UCMPD completed and ongoing trainings are displayed on the following site and will be continuously updated: <https://police.ucmerced.edu/about/professional-development>
 9. Establishment of a Valuing Black Lives at UCM Task Force [Point of Contacts: Dania Matos, J.D., Associate Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer, Jonathan Grady, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students, and Robin DeLugan, Ph.D., Academic Senate]
 - The University is establishing a Valuing Black Lives at UCM Task Force to address the following:
 - Student Support
 - Community Engagement
 - Policing and Anti-Black Violence
 - Staff and Faculty Recruitment and Retention
 - Scholarship, Research, and Funding
 - There will be three co-facilitators for each sub-committee (student, staff, faculty). The co-facilitators will invite stakeholders to join individual sub-committees. Students, staff, and faculty will make up each sub-committee. The sub-committees will work with Dania, Jonathan, Robin, Chancellor, and Provost and Executive Vice Chancellor, Gregg Camfield to ensure accountability measures are in place and progress is made.
 - Students will receive an appreciation honorarium for their service.

Short-term (2020-2021)

- UCMPD will:

- Develop a community pledge with students, staff, and faculty that focuses on addressing anti-Black violence and anti-Blackness.
- Create and implement campaigns and initiatives addressing anti-Black violence and anti-Blackness. Collaborate with units such as the Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs, Counseling and Psychological Services, the Dean of Students Office, the Pan-African Council, etc.
- Develop UCMPD Principles of Community Spotlights and Socials (Fall & Spring)
- Implement ongoing UCMPD forums to garner feedback from the community.
- Develop monthly restorative justice talks to address historical trauma, radical healing, and critical hope in collaboration with various stakeholders such as the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility and the Office of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs.
- Work with the Office of Student Rights and Responsibility to develop “Know Your Rights” resources for students.
- Continue to sustain, revise, and expand student and community mentorship initiatives and opportunities utilizing a social justice lens (Police Mentors and Police Insight Program).
- Examine the relationship between UCMPD and the MPD.
- Ensure an external review of UCMPD is conducted from an equity and justice framework.

Long-term (2021+)

- Ensure recommendations from internal external review are reviewed and enacted.
- Continue to address systemic challenges as they relate to anti-Black violence.
- Continue to build stronger partnerships across and within the campus as well as the larger Merced community.

Proposal #2: Black Student Resource Center Expansion

Proposal #5: Increased Professional Development for Black Student Leaders

Proposal #6: Unity Initiative: Student Led Diversity and Equity Board

[Point of Contact]: Onar Primitivo, Director of Social Justice Initiatives and Identity Programs

**The university is committed to expanding services and resources to support Black student success. The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Program’s (OSJIIP) for example, aims to enhance the retention of our historically underserved scholars and to foster an inclusive campus environment for all by providing opportunities for holistic development, intersectional community building, and student agency.*

Immediate (Summer 2020)

- The Dean of Students Office and the Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Program’s (OSJIIP) co-sponsored a Radical Healing Workshop (Sharon Johnson...June 5th).
- OSJIIP continues to have Virtual Healing Talks (will be ongoing through 2020-2021).
- Funding Support for all Cultural Clubs and Organizations
 - OSJIIP has received funding to allocate to student clubs/organizations addressing social justice, equity, diversity and inclusion efforts, ways to build coalition and community in the form of EDI grants, application criteria is in progress.
- The Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Program’s (OSJIIP) increased student staff to support EDI work (already allocated in 2020-2021 budget)

- Received funding for six (6) student employees to assist with outreach, engagement and collect data related to student experiences and success.
- Implementation of a Cultural/Resource Center Advisory Board foundations with on-going outreach with student leaders and multicultural student clubs/organizations to gathering information and recommendations.
- Black Book website development (OSJIIP graphic designer has been working directly with Vice Chancellor, Charles Nies).
- Continue to provide healing/community circles, caucus/identity spaces for student scholars.
- Actively support AFRO Hall Living Learning Community and collaborate with AFRO student club, and Residential Education ensuring concerns and needs are being addressed.

Short-term (2020-2021)

- Implementation of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Student Advisory Board for the Office of Social Justice Initiatives & Identity Programs (OSJIIP) and identify scholars, staff and faculty. This advisory board will inform different approaches and provide recommendations in moving social justice, equity and inclusion framework with the pillars and priorities of OSJIIP.
- Reactivate the Multicultural Student Council within Associated Students of UC Merced-ASUCM as one option, another is to create a student-led equity and diversity advisory board and initiate:
 - Create Focus groups to identify:
 - Mission & Vision
 - Committee make up
 - Advisory Board's role
- OSJIIP Equity, Diversity, Inclusion Grants-EDI (already allocated in 2020-2021 budget) are available for all multicultural student organizations to apply and collaborate with other student organizations that can address ways of coalition building, addressing campus climate and social justice. The process, application will be finalized for the grants to be available for Fall 2020.
- OSJIIP has received additional funding for AFRO Hall Living Learning Community providing additional resources for programming, professional development and community/coalition building.
- OSJIIP collaboration with Leadership, Career and Service providing leadership training and development for all the Black/African American organizations. In the past, such trainings and workshops were provided for each organization such as AFRO Hall retreat, BSU executive board leadership workshops, and consistent outreach.
- OSJIIP is committed to community engagement and provide space for ongoing meetings with our Black/African American scholars and leaders for continued assessment of current needs and experiences.
- The Office of Student Involvement will be initiating grants (that clubs and organizations can apply for) to help clubs and organizations with professional development, community engagement, and leadership.
- With a focus on equity and access, Student Affairs will continue to build/strengthen community partnerships and expand K-12 outreach (Summer Youth Academy, Bright Success Center, Community Engagement Center, Enrollment Management, etc.).

- Dr. Mari Harris has accepted a new position, Director of Extension Education Programs. Dr. Mari Harris’s current work around equity and access and the recruitment of Black student leaders at UC Merced will be continuously supported and expanded by Student Affairs (Black student admit receptions, initiatives, staffing, etc.).
- The Pan-African Council will be consulted with any future conversations about space moves at they relate to the Black Student Resource Center. Dr. Nies will notify students when these conversations begin.

Long-term (2021+)

- Creation of a Black Student Resource Center as a Retention Center (ongoing conversations stakeholders such as the Dean of Students and Bright Success Center). Students will play a pivotal role in the construction of this. Retention initiatives in cultural/affinity spaces is critical as a campus committed to the wholistic development of the student scholar. Cultural/affinity spaces moving forward will look at best practices such as the “Geometric Model of Student Persistence and Achievement.”
 - Cognitive Factors
 - Institutional/Systemic Factors
 - Social Factors
- Cultural/Resource Advisory Boards
 - Create Multicultural Center, LGBTQ+/Pride Center, Graduate Cultural Resource Center & Black Student Resource Center (Pan African Council) advisory boards by Dec 2020
- Social Justice Quad located between Kolligian Library and COB2- As part of 2020 Project and from previous focus groups with multicultural student organizations and graduate students, this area of campus can focus on programming, community building, multicultural events and tabling; e.g.: Cultural Night showcasing our multicultural student clubs and organizations showcased their culture and scholars having the opportunities to socialize and connect.
- Hiring of Full Time Employee-FTE Professional Staff member serving as a resource to the Black/African American student population
 - From OSJIIP , currently have Lorene Fisher, Coordinator of Womxn’s Programs and Social Justice Initiatives as the lead contact staff member and Onar Primitivo, Director of OSJIIP both committed to Black Excellence

Proposal #3: Hiring of a Black Psychologist and Development of Mental Health Resources for Black Students **[Point of Contact]: Tania Gonzalez, Ph.D.**

** CAPS acknowledges the pandemic of racism taking the lives of people in the Black and African-American community and the dire psychological and physical consequences resulting from these systemic, long standing injustices. CAPS is committed to listening and responding to the mental health needs of our African American and Black student community. Additionally, CAPS staff is prepared and ready to provide same day mental health support to our scholars impacted by these recent and historically traumatic events. Thus, CAPS remains determined to continue building a mental health program that includes partnerships with our students of color, as well as campus stakeholders, to develop initiatives and resources around anti-Black violence, radical healing, and wellness.*

Immediate (Summer 2020)

- Current Job Description for Staff Psychologist has been revised to include “Candidates with experience working with under-represented populations and/or marginalized communities in academia preferred.”

Will revise again, to include “Candidates must demonstrate commitment to servicing underrepresented and/or marginalized populations. Experience working with Black, African-American and LGBTQ+ communities in academia preferred.”

- Job Postings currently advertised through The Association for Black Psychologists.
- Develop link/tab on CAPS website specifically for Black student mental health and wellness resources.

Short-term (2020-2021)

- CAPS will invite a representative from the DEB to participate in the interview process for candidates who have applied to clinical staffing positions.
- Collaborate with student representatives (DEB and/or Pan-Afrikan Council) and campus/system-wide stakeholders to continue developing CAPS website to reflect mental health and wellness resources specifically for Black student community.
- Cultivating Community & Resilience: Community Mental Health Check-In for Black Students with CAPS representatives.
- Support Group for Students of Color facilitated by CAPS clinician.

Long-term (2021+)

- Collaborate with campus stakeholders and student representatives to provide workshop/outreach/presentations specifically in support of Black student mental health.
- In conjunction with campus stakeholders, re-establish and develop a Mental Health Advisory Committee to include student representation (D.E.B. and/or Pan-Afrikan Council).
- Collaborate with campus stakeholders to develop a position within CAPS that coordinates Diversity, Equity and Inclusion efforts within the mental health systems framework.
- Continue to require CAPS clinical staff to complete continuing education credits inclusive of ongoing cultural diversity training.

Proposal #4: Additions to Major Requirements to Include Mandatory Conversations about Race [Point of Contact]: Dania Matos, J.D., Associate Chancellor and Chief Diversity Officer, Charles Nies, Ph.D., Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, and Jonathan Grady, Ph.D., Associate Vice Chancellor and Dean of Students

** The content in this section was collected and synthesized by Jess Evora and Jacob Croasdale. However, many individuals contributed. Please see refer to the “Participants” section for a full list of individuals who contributed to this report. The Valuing Black Lives at UCM Task Force includes a sub-committee on “Scholarship, Research, and Funding Opportunities.” Ideas presented below examine how UCM can integrate conversations around racial equity and justice across and within the campus community. These ideas will be shared with the Valuing Black Lives at UCM Task Force as examples as to how the university can be more intentional and collaborative in including discussions about racial inequality both through academic efforts as well as through extracurricular activities. The Valuing Black Lives at UCM Task Force will review the below ideas and will consider immediate, short-term, and long-term action steps. **It will also be important to ensure that the “Diversity and Identity” intellectual experience badge lives up to its focus on racial justice and intersectionality.***

Potential Areas of Focus:

1. **Incorporate Racial Equity and Justice issues into multiple areas in Student Affairs**, in a cohesive Division-wide effort to ensure student
 - a. Identify potential ideas for a cohesive effort among various Student Affairs entities to embed opportunities for discussions on race issues (discrimination & inequality) into the work we are currently doing, as well as any new initiatives.

- b. The goal would be to ensure that no matter the unique journey a student takes in their student engagement, they will come across multiple opportunities to discuss issues regarding racial & systematic inequality.
2. **Highlight systemic issues as the problem**, so that students don't internalize being from a "disadvantage background" and so that ALL students and staff realize it is ALL of our problem. Each of us can contribute to addressing these issues. Each of us has the capacity to create a more equitable environment at UC Merced.
3. **Empower ALL students** to understand they are equally capable of success at UC Merced.
4. Address these issues through our programming, policies, and everyday practices, creating foundation to be more proactive, rather than simply reactive.
5. **Provide more identity-based programs** to address the specific needs of various student populations.

Important Considerations

1. **We should not focus simply on creating new programs.** Rather, we should focus on modifying our existing work and services to be more equitable, and to include important conversations about race in all of our work. We should aim to imbed policies/structural changes into our work.
2. **We must not "other" the problem.**
 - a. Too often OSJIP and the EDI office are tasked with addressing these issues. We should expect that the entire university is called to action.
 - b. Too often we create specific DEI programs, rather than imbedding into everything we do.
3. **We can BOTH create spaces specifically for Black students AND make sure all students are engaging in these conversations.** We can and should take both approaches.
4. **We should address racial inequities overall, AND specifically talk about anti-Black racism.**
5. Student Affairs units should not just align our individual work, but truly collaborate.
6. **We should ensure transparency in decision-making.**
 - a. Keep both students and all staff informed and involved.
 - b. Truly make students part of the process and conversation rather than the recipients.
7. Students, as well as staff, should be empowered to take the reins on any resulting initiatives.
8. **We should talk about issues at all levels:** on campus, issues in Merced, and on the national and global scale.

Potential Programs, Initiatives, and Structural Changes

- **Train SA staff (including student staff and volunteers) to have an Asset-Mindset (rather than a deficit-mindset) and create curriculum that develops this mindset in students.**
 - **There is too often a narrative around underrepresented students, particularly our Black students, that implies that they are less capable than their peers, and that they need extra help. That is not the case.** They bring great value to the University and are just as capable as any other student. It is the system needs help. We must focus on the system of support, and we must empower our students.
 - **"Asset Inventory Exercise** (Fujimoto, Fujimoto & Huang, 2016; Referenced in Pendakur 2020. Facilitate this exercise with students to help them identify the numerous capacities and experiences they bring to campus that can help them drive their own success, rather than the deficit-mindset.
 - **Example of harmful messaging due to deficit-mindset:** "They are disadvantaged, so they need help." The students may hear this, internalize this, and as a result feel less capable than their

peers. They may begin to believe that they bring no value to the campus community, and that they are a burden to the University.

- **Rather than a Common Book for all incoming students like you see at many universities, identify required short readings (articles, book excerpts, etc. Available online)** that highlight racial inequalities and empower ALL students to find ways to address such issues while at UC Merced and beyond.
 - **Challenge all Student Affairs units to agree to incorporate these 2-3 articles into their broad curriculum** (All SA Student Staff, RA trainings, leadership trainings, orientation student staff, new students participating in orientation, residential programming, leadership development, career development, UC Merced-run internships, Community Engagement training, etc.).
 - During a SA Meeting in May/June, facilitate breakout groups in which SA staff have conversations about these articles, and share ideas regarding how the articles can be incorporated into programming and initiatives.
 - Choose a new set of articles each year, and ensure exposure for all students, from first-years and new transfers, to continuing undergrads and graduate students.
 - With every unit incorporating all article into their curriculum each year, many students will be exposed to such conversation multiple times throughout the year, in various capacities of their involvement, and in every year of their tenure at UC Merced.
- **USTU-10 Classes taught by Student Affairs professionals (potential SPARK courses as well)** could incorporate discussions on systematic racial inequalities both in society, but also acknowledge our own systematic contributions to the problem at UC Merced, helping students understand it is everyone's problem, and we can all contribute to the solution.
- **This work often exists as “extra work,” or “unrecognized work”.** Prioritize this work by specifically including it in job descriptions.
- **An Equity and Inclusion statement isn't enough.** We must outline specific programs and policies within SA that directly address these issues, and ensure these are published right along with our equity statements, so that all members of the community may review, ensuring transparency.
 - Deeply Reviewing and revising policies that disproportionately impact different student populations. Examples: policies designed for traditional age students, how does this impact non-traditional
 - Establish diversity and equity as a philosophical commitment, truly imbed it into the DNA of Student Affairs at UC Merced.
 - Incorporate these discussions into every part of work including, budget decisions, policy changes, etc. in the way we make budget decisions, policy decisions, etc.
- **Community Awareness:**
 - **Racial Inequities in Merced. We are all a part of this community.** It is our responsibility to understand it. We should include in new student curriculum a thorough review of the city of Merced history, the city demographics, the cultures that make up the diversity of Merced, and the issues related to racial and systematic inequities in Merced.
 - **Awareness of Merced Community: Break down the “Diversity” at UC Merced.**
 - Incorporate discussions that highlight the population demographics of students, faculty, and also staff.
 - We often praise our diversity, but we don't break it down to understand that this diverse environment feels different to different populations, particularly our Black population which has a percentage similar to most PWIs.

- **Work with faculty to potentially encourage students to participate in extracurricular activities that provide opportunities to engage in the opportunities that Student Affairs puts forth as a result of this initiative.**
 - How do we help faculty and other units outside of SA better understand our resources?
 - How do we make faculty aware of impactful extra credit opportunities relevant to classroom content?
- **Compose a permanent committee for accountability: Racial & Systematic Equity in Extracurricular Review Committee:**
 - **Designate representatives from all units in Student Affairs to meet three times a year:** (Fall, Spring, Summer), to review Division-wide initiatives to ensure accountability and cohesiveness among efforts to imbed opportunities for conversations on these important issues into our curriculum. This committee would also make sure our programs are equitable and that we are indeed facilitating these important conversations with students.
 - **Students of all racial backgrounds and underrepresented populations should be invited to the committee.**
- **Additional Ideas**
 - Require diversity training for staff and faculty, rather offering them as optional.
 - Faculty Hiring: Create a commitment to diversity statement.
 - Create more voting initiatives to equalize whose voices are heard at the polls.
 - Create a Resource Center for supporting this process.

Individual Contributors to this Section:

- **Amanda Punzalan**, Health Promotions
- **Vernette Doty**, Community Engagement Center
- **Liz Atilano**, Center for Career and Professional Advancement
- **Hector Cuevas**, Center for Career and Professional Advancement
- **Sarah Hopkins-Chery**, Head Coach, Women's Basketball, Recreation & Athletics
 - **Ashley Summerset**, Game Operations Manager, Recreation & Athletics
 - **Bavneet Kaur**, Basic Needs
 - **Charah Coleman**, Financial Wellness
 - **Martin Reed**, Student Life & Residential Education
 - **Donovan Riley**, ResEd
 - **Hayley Montoya**, OSI
 - **Karen Linam** - PALS
 - **Edith Ramirez** - Guardian Scholars Program
 - **Kisha McQuire** - Fiat Lux
 - **Le'Trice Curl**, Student Rights and Responsibilities
 - **Onar Primitivo**, OSJIP
- **Jacob Croasdale**, Margo F. Souza Student Leadership Center
- **Jess Evora**, Margo F. Souza Student Leadership Center

Accountability and Advocacy

- This MOU will be posted on unit websites for transparency and accountability (OSJIIP, EDI, DOS, etc.).
- Black student leaders will continue to meet with Dr. Nies monthly to discuss concerns and updates.
- A Valuing Black Lives at UCM Task Force will be established.

- Co-facilitators will provide updates to the UCM community. These updates will be compiled and posted on unit websites for transparency. If any changes occur, changes will be reflected and updated on unit websites (OSJIIP, EDI, DOS, etc.).
- A Black student, staff, and faculty accountability group will be established (led by Dr. Maria Martin).
- Creation of student-led Diversity and Equity Board